

## 1000 words about the mobility of contemporary dance in LATVIA

- **Festivals**

The dance festivals in Latvia:

**Time To Dance**, international contemporary dance festival organized by The Latvian Association of Choreographers (LAC).

In Riga, every June for 3-4 days.

The festival traditionally presents international guest performances, a programme of Latvian choreographers and a night of student performances, as well as runs an extensive workshop programme. [www.dance.lv](http://www.dance.lv)

**International Baltic Ballet festival**. The festival presents a mixed programme, mostly international ballet artists and classic dance performances, but also some contemporary dance companies from abroad.

In Riga. every year in spring (April-May). [www.ballet-festival.lv](http://www.ballet-festival.lv)

**Vides deja**, a small festival focusing on site-specific and outdoor performances with both professional and amateur participation.

Organised by "Stars Well"/ Lilija Lipora.

Every August in different places, nearby Riga.

[www.starswell.lv](http://www.starswell.lv)

**Kontakts Grobiņā**, a small festival dedicated to contact improvisation in Grobiņa in Western Latvia. Two editions have taken place in 2012 and 2013.

<https://lv-lv.facebook.com/CI.Grobina>

**Homo Novus**, the biggest international festival of performing arts in Latvia organised by New Theatre Institute of Latvia (NTIL) includes contemporary dance performances by international artists in each festival programme.

In Riga, September on a bi-annual basis (next edition in 2015). [www.homonovus.lv](http://www.homonovus.lv)



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## 2. Venues

There are no dance venues, yet at least two independent venues in Riga where choreographers show their work on a regular basis

Theatre 'Ģertrūdes ielas teātris' [www.git.lv](http://www.git.lv)

'Zirgu pasts", the venue of Latvian Academy of Culture

## 3. Agents

None

## 4. Rehearsal spaces

Rehearsal spaces are either private studios, schools or venues where the production is being presented.

To mention the most frequently used:

Centre for dance courses and afternoon classes "I-dejas māja": [www.i-deja.lv](http://www.i-deja.lv)

Private dance school Dzirnas: [www.dzirnas.lv](http://www.dzirnas.lv)

## 5. Touring/mobility structures and networks

There are no structures or networks for touring, yet in recent years several new concert venues have been built in the regional cities of Latvia (in Rēzekne, Cēsis and coming soon in Liepāja), which has increased the presentation of dance outside Riga.

## 6. Funding of mobility and touring of national and foreign dance companies.

Individual artists and companies can apply for travel funding in open competition at State Culture Capital Foundation (SCCF) throughout the year.

SCCF has also run a special funding programme for touring of arts projects to Latvian regions.



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## 7. Latvian dance abroad

Except for National ballet company, there is no regularly touring dance company in Latvia. In general, the circulation of Latvian artists abroad is low and mostly connected to thematic festivals or special collaboration and exchange programmes.

However, New Baltic Dance festival in Vilnius has been presenting Latvian contemporary dance annually for several years already.

## 8. Residencies

There are no regular artist-in-residence programmes aimed at dancers. Individual arrangements are possible with the residence centre Serde in Aizpute ([www.serde.lv](http://www.serde.lv)) and with some of the venues in Riga, like Theatre 'Ģertrūdes ielas teātris'.

NTIL has offered residencies in the frame of European collaboration projects (Wilderness dance of kedja 2012-2015), so has done LAC (E-Motional Bodies and Cities).

## 9. Co-production possibilities

Co-productions are rare and mostly connected to specific collaboration projects or arrangements among European partners. NTIL has acted as a co-producer, so has done independent theatre 'Ģertrūdes ielas teātris' and LAC.

## 10. Daily training

As a recent initiative, LAC has been organising classes once a week for professional dancers.

Otherwise, professionals can also take advantage of masterclasses and workshops by foreign visiting companies.



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## 11. National features

With the establishment of Dance and Choreography Department at the Latvian Academy of Culture in 1999 (by initiative of dancer, choreographer and teacher Olga Zitluhina), one can talk about a systematic development of Latvian contemporary dance. The school offers a quality education with BA in contemporary dance and its 3 generations of graduates form the core of Latvian dance scene. This, on one hand, creates a common ground and unity among the local dancers but is also responsible for a certain uniformity in the artistic expression.

The international collaboration projects are therefore vital for local development. The status of Riga as European Culture Capital year in 2014 has increased possibilities for local dance artists to participate in international projects and hopefully would act as catalyst for future working methods.

Meanwhile the artistic production among the young generation of dance artists has been growing both in numbers and scope. The younger dance makers show interest in collaboration with artists of other disciplines and are ready to use all kinds of venues for presentation of work. The scale of work is small, yet dance performances now is a regular feature on seasonal programmes of independent venues (*GIT, Dirty Deal Teatro*), which has helped to raise the knowledge and visibility of contemporary dance.

Since the only state supported dance company in Latvian National ballet, all contemporary dance artists are freelancers that divide their time between creation of artistic projects, teaching for amateurs and working as choreographic assistants in state repertory theatres, and dancing in commercial projects. Along with the fact that dance production time is short and possibilities to work are not regular, this "multi-tasking" in the long run presents a danger for the artistic practice of dancers and quality of productions. There are some short-term strategies put into work to offer alternative production processes (by NTIL and LAC) yet the status of dance as an art form and its development on a national level with regular funding remains an issue.



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## Most important organizations

**Latvian Association of Choreographers** (LAC) is an artist run organisation which deals with practical issues of dance artists (daily training and standard remuneration), but also strives to draw a vision and strategy for development of Latvian contemporary dance.

LAC is also the organizer of *Time To Dance* festival.

**Latvian Academy of Culture/ Dance Department** was established and is run by **Olga Zitluhina**, who remains a fundamental person and unique force in Latvian dance through her influential teaching of young generation and strong position in the local arts scene.

**Journal.dance.lv** (run by Inta Balode) is an online platform for writing about dance.

**New Theatre Institute of Latvia** (NTIL) and producer Laura Stasane acts as a producer and initiator of dance projects and aims to introduce alternative working methods and approaches in dance production, ranging from research on everyday movement and work with non-professionals to international collaboration projects dispersed in the urban spaces across Riga.

**Theatre "Ģertrūdes ielas teātris"** is an independent theatre venue that presents and also produces dance regularly.

## Politics

An official document for the strategy of dance development in Latvia has been discussed in a working group of experts from the dance field, initiated by the Latvian Ministry of Culture since autumn 2012. The conclusions are made but are yet to be included in the guidelines for cultural policy "Creative Latvia", which is the single most important document for cultural policy in Latvia in the period 2014-2020.

Laura Stašāne, New Theatre Institute of Latvia, June 2014



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With the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union